goat. Shillings must be given to induce her to enter the hut, to sit down, to accept water for washing her hands and food, to eat. Another ox is killed and the meat is divided as follows : the liver and the heart are for the bride's father, the leg for her mother, the *nyimba*, viz. the womb, which includes the ribs, sternum etc. for the maternal uncle. The women, when they return home, take all these pieces of meat to their several destinations. They put a skewer through the heart and liver and stick it into the ground before the bride's father's hut saying : " This is the notification of the husband's people. "

If the total number of the oxen has been remitted on the lobola day, *the departure of the new wife* for the husband's kraal (thloma) will not be long delayed. But should there be some oxen wanting, a wise father will not allow her to go until the whole lobolo has been paid. The husband works hard to get together the other oxen. He brings them, without ceremony, together with a sovereign, which he places before the bride's father as a present, saying : " This is my spitting for you, my father! " He does the same for the mother. He now feels the right to claim his wife. They answer : " Give us time to prepare her trousseau." The trousseau consists of two mats, two or three big spoons, some pots, a wooden platter, a pestle and a mortar, and one hoe provided by the maternal uncle, which make up all the equipment of a Nkuna bride. All her female relations meet and, after having exhorted (1) her to be obedient, to accept all the hardships she will find in her new home, they accompany her to her husband's village. This is the *hloma*. The men do not go, except the ntjumi of the bride's family. The father, on the morning before they leave, kills a fowl and *hahla*, viz. makes a sacrifice, telling his ancestors that his daughter goes to be married, and praying for her. The ntjumi,

(1) " Hear! " the old women say to the bride, " you have been a good girl, so far, henceforth you will be treated as a slave! You will be accused of adultery and of witchcraft. You will have no more happiness. But accept all that! They will beat you, kill you and we shall not be able to deliver you, because we have eaten their oxen. " These exhortations are worth reproducing, as they show clearly the conditions under which the girl goes to her husband. She is not protected by the lobolo. On the contrary, the lobolo has made her the possession of the husband's family, from whom she must now accept any treatment. (See Part II).

## E. MATURE AGE

### 1. *The Bantu Ideal.*

581 554 562 885 The married man is called " he who has his home " (a ni le kwakwe) in opposition to the single man (nkhwenda). But let us say at once that the kind of individual called bachelor does not abound amongst the Bantus. Only the utterly wretched, invalids, and the weak-minded, are deprived of legal marriage, which for the black man is and remains the one object in life. It is through his wife and children that he becomes somebody in society. This fact does not appear during the first year of wedlock, for the newly married woman must cook at the fireplace of her mother-in-law. She is hardly more than a servant during a whole year ; she does not possess her own pot ; and this must be so because she does not yet eat the mealies of her own garden, having ploughed her fields in her former domicile the previous year. Her husband eats with her. He is not yet 595 a lord. But if he is rich, if he is the heir of an important man, he will not be long in buying a second and third wife.

These new marriages will be contracted like the first, but with less pomp. It may even happen that the feast is held in the husband's village, if he is middle-aged and is celebrating his fifth or sixth wedding.

595 342 556 592 361 For each new wife, he will build a hut. He has begun his village when building the house of his first wife, the great wife, (naati lwe nkulu) as she is called, who will remain the principal one whatever may happen. While, without compass, he was drawing on the ground, with the marvellous instinct of the South African Native, the circumference of the circle on which the patched reed walls of his dwelling were to rise, while he was covering this circular wall with a conical roof, he was saying to himself : " I establish my home ; I inaugurate my village ". During the following years, the aim of his life will be to complete little by little another wider circle... When he has bought his

says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi." — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the question of marriage, insist on two other points; the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

### 2) Special feminine taboos.

Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses; the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

Other

animals are taboo for girls : the *hare* because it is too cunning ; and the antelope *nhlengane*. This antelope raises the foot when it hears a noise ; hence the idea that its leg is hollow and that it perceives the sound through it. The child would do the same, if its mother were to eat the meat of the nhlengane. It would be unable to hear with its ears, only with its hands!

The *legs* of fowls (tibias) are also taboo for all women, because the hen scatters the sand... So are the *hoofs of oxen*, and *pigs' feet*. A woman eating them would walk too much... She would go everywhere to look for husbands!

It is taboo for a girl to *walk amongst pumpkin plants* (maranga), to pluck the fruits. She is only allowed to pluck those which can *be reached from outside*. *Were she to transgress this law*, she would emit a bad odour, and no boy would court her. Her mother, having no fear of being despised, can walk amongst the pumpkins. A second taboo relative to pumpkins is this : unmarried women must cut a "pumpkin nose" (nhompfu) viz. the end of the stem, and fix it at their waist when plucking the pumpkins, lest they get abcesses in certain regions of their body.

It is taboo for them to eat cooked *oxen blood* (bubendje). The following taboos apply also to *married women*. They are not allowed to eat what is called *nkopfu*, viz. some parts of the bowels which are cooked together with the stomach of the ox. "It would spoil the child inside." The *testicles*, which are generally given to the uterine nephew when the meat is distributed according to the laws, and the *underlip* of any animal are also forbidden to them. So is also the *tongue*... because it is reserved for old people as a mark of respect! The *rectum* (gobana) is taboo for women and children. Children might make unseemly noises from the rectum! Women must abstain from *porcupine* and *monkeys' flesh* ; all their offspr[illegible]uld resemble these animals. Such cases have happened, it [illegible] Women must not eat *eggs* ; they would run a double danger : their child might be born bald and remain so ; or they might be like a hen, which runs in all directions when laying an egg. They would have no peace in child bearing! (See also page 101.)

Nubile girls, during their "tiwheti," must not *approach the*

Nubile girls during their "tiwheti" must approach the oxen *kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked by a bad cough (mukhulwane), get thin! This taboo is instituted to protect the oxen, not the human inhabitants of the village, as D. Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus. (Part IV. Ch. I. E.) When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of the taboos cease, and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if they wish!

### 3) The first year of married life.

I shall not return to the subject of marriage rites, which have been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that, though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku kandja bukati), she does not enter on the new state with any enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be illtreated, accused of witchcraft and adultery, etc. Her sisters bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she has been paid for, though it does not constitute an actual sale, puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire-place of her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back to eat with the men. In some places it would seem that the husband eats with her the whole year, until she has her own pot (hlembeto).

### 4) Husband and wife.

What are the relations between husband and wife after the honey-moon? Of course they vary very much according to the character of both. As a rule however, the married people have very little intimacy with each other; the man remains with his companions on the "bandla," the village square where they meet, and only occasionally comes into the "ndangu," the reed enclosure of the fire-place, which is the true domain of the

I: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga



586 362 378 mere incompatibility of temper. Heathen men are often hard to their wives. They refuse to give them money to buy clothing. "They are stones," said one of these men to me. "Though you scratch a stone with your nail, the nail will break and the stone will remain!" On the other hand, the women are by no means sweet, obedient creatures ; therefore quarrelling often takes place. When she thinks she is persecuted (shanisa), the wife *runs home*. This is her great weapon. The husband heaves a sigh of relief... But very soon he becomes aware of his misfortune. No food, no cooked meal in the evening! His companions share their own food with him for some days, but they will not consent to feed him long. He will have to go modestly, humbly to his parents-in-law and ask his wife to return. Then they enquire into the matter, and he perhaps receives a good scolding. It may be that the domestic life will improve, both fearing the renewal of the conflict. It may however be that the situation will grow worse and worse, and then it will lead to divorce, viz. the husband will claim his money and, when he gets it back, the marriage is dissolved (ku dlawa ka bukati).

An accusation of witchcraft may also cause divorce, especially after the death of a child ; so also can sterility, as we have seen, p. 190. Gross selfishness on the part of the husband may lead to it ; many tales tell the story of a man who in time of famine succeeded in killing an antelope, kept the meat for himself and did not give any to his wife and children. The wife noticed it and, when the famine came to an end, she invited all her relatives to a beer feast. Then she shewed them the bones of the antelope, telling them how badly her husband had treated her ; her parents took her home together with the children. Sometimes the conclusion of the tale is that the man even lost his lobolo money, as a punishment for his evil deed! (See *Grammaire Ronga*, page 202. *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 260.)

### 11) Widowhood.

783 765 When a man dies all his relatives are contaminated by the defilement of death, as we have seen (Page 143). There are concentric circles around him, some people being more affected

783 765 562 than others. The wives form the first circle, especially the first wife. They have therefore to perform peculiar purifying ceremonies which throw great light on the profound feelings of the Thongas regarding life and nature. On the other hand they are the property of the husband's family and they are part of his belongings. How are they to be distributed amongst his heirs ? This is a very delicate matter. It is more or less regulated by the tribal law. Hence there are two series of rites to consider, in the customs relating to widows : 1) The rites of purification, 2) the laws of distribution.

783 765 Let us describe first the fate of the great wife amongst the Rongas (See for supplementary details : The fate of widows amongst the Ba-Ronga. S.A.A.A.S. 1909).

a) *The first day*. Manyibane is dead! — a sad event for his wife. She is called to inspect his grave. She assists silently at his funeral. But as soon as the younger brother of the deceased has finished praying, she bursts into tears and cries aloud! Her parents cry also : "Our child has fallen into misfortune! Now the cold has come for her! She will learn to know the cold water!" This is an allusion to the kind of life which the new widow will have to lead. Every morning she must go to the lake or the pool, with her companions, to have her whole body washed till the days of purification are completed.

783 765 575 The first of these purifying rites is performed just after the burial. The widow, surrounded by other women, goes to the pool and there all must wash their bodies. Most of them return home at once. But the widow remains there with *other widows* who have lost their husbands in former years. They form a *secret society* which assembles only to receive new members into its ranks. Nobody must see the strange rites performed by them. It is a *Ngoma* (the same word as for the circumcision school). However, the mysterious company takes possession of the great road (gondjwen), and every one must take care not to pass along it at that time, for great misfortune might overtake the imprudent one who should approach too near and catch a glimpse of the proceedings. A wise man, on seeing the suspicious group

768 left by a man. When they have been distributed, the minor
428 possessions of the deceased are adjudicated. As regards *oxen*,
604 *money*, these have been already remitted to the younger brother or, in his absence, to the sons. The younger brother will use them as family property to buy a wife for his son or for the son of the deceased, when he comes of age. In the distribution of the implements which have been cleansed, but left lying on the ground in front of the hut up to this day, the *ntukulu*, viz. the principal uterine nephew again plays an important part. He has the right of *tjhumba*, viz. of picking out for himself one of the assagais of his uncle, just as the maternal uncle takes (tjhumba) one pound from the lobola money (See Part II). Every warrior possesses at least two assagais ; the big one belongs in principle to the chief, and must be inherited by the eldest son. The nephew takes the smaller one, but he must precede his cousin in choosing ; in appropriating this weapon, he *surrenders* or transmits (nyiketa) the inheritance to the true heirs. This is a very characteristic expression. It seems as if he wished to assert his right ; but he takes the less valuable weapon and leaves the better one to the son. The explanation of this custom is probably to be found in the evolution of the family system which must have taken place amongst the Thongas (See Part II). In fact all the *batukulu* stand in a line and receive a portion of the property of the deceased, a knife, an axe, a small punch, etc. Women never inherit (a ba di
562 pfindla). When no heir exists except females, they may receive
428 something, but the valuable property must be kept by them for their sons, the uterine nephews of the deceased. Why ? Because, in the mind of the Thongas, a woman is not capable of possessing ; she is not able to build an oxen kraal and repair it ; how could she possess oxen ? The only thing she can do is to arrange a pig's kraal. Therefore she can own pigs, but nothing else!

768 The end of the feast of the adjudication of the inheritance is the distribution of the flesh of the victims. The company breaks up, each party having received one of the limbs. They must eat it on their way home, somewhere under a tree, on the road ; neither in the mortuary village, nor in their own kraal. It is

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga



583 177 the new conditions, especially when a stay of a year or two in Johannesburg was long enough to save the necessary sum. Boys who had no sister, and who would have been destitute in former times, could then dream of a *tshenwge* viz., of marrying three or four wives! And they had this advantage that, their wives not having been bought with family property (their sister's oxen), no bakoñwana could disturb them in their domestic happiness, as may happen to those who marry by means of the first-mentioned lobolo.

This leads us to consider :

583 II. *The original meaning and the consequences of the lobola.*

As we have said previously, the only way of understanding the lobola, as well as other similar payments in kind which we meet with amongst a great number of uncivilized or half civilized nations, (1) is to consider it as *a compensation given by one group to another group*, in order to restore the equilibrium between the various collective units composing the clan. The first group acquires a new member : the second feels itself diminished, and claims something which permits it to reconstitute itself, in its turn, by the acquisition of another woman. This collectivist conception alone explains all the facts.

583 562 593 618 In this way, the acquired wife, though she keeps her shibongo (clan name), becomes the property of the first group. She is aggregated to it by complicated marriage ceremonies, representing the passage from one family to another. She is owned by the new family, herself and the children who will be born of her. She is not in any way a slave, but she is nevertheless owned. She is not the individual property of one man, but the collective property of a group. Hence the following facts :

1) Her whole family take part in the marriage ceremonies, especially on the day when the lobola is brought by the bridegroom

(1) See A. van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage*, p. 170. The *Kalym* of the Turko-Mongolians, the *Nyen* of Southern Thibet, etc., correspond to the Bantu lobola.

583 586 562 593 concluded on the lobola basis, are frequently dissolved (1). The tie being purely material, it is easy to sever it. When the husband "bitana tihomu," claims his oxen, who could refuse to return them ? It is certainly erroneous to say that the lobola is a contract made between two families in order to guarantee the good treatment of the wife by her husband and vice versa, to prevent the husband beating his wife or the wife deserting the conjugal home from mere caprice. It has even been asserted that this sum of money was a pledge, a security, claimed by the wife's parents for the protection of their daughter! There is nothing of the kind in this institution. The exhortations addressed to the bride on the day of her *hloma* (page 118) prove clearly enough that, on the contrary, owing to the lobola, the husband has every right over her, and that she has no right to protest if he uses or abuses this right.

### 2) Bad consequences of the lobola custom.

583 562 1) And this is the first *regrettable consequence of the lobolo* : the woman is undoubtedly reduced to an *inferior position* by the fact that she has been lobola. *a)* This appears clearly in the fact that, though she is not looked upon exactly as a head of cattle, a marriageable girl is in principle entirely at the mercy of her family as regards the choice of her husband. In the same way a widow to be inherited is in the hands of her deceased husband's family.

586 548 (1) I will give only one example which I witnessed amongst my neighbours and which shows that, with women of loose character, at any rate, the payment of lobolo helps very little to strengthen the matrimonial tie. A girl named Hlapfuta, daughter of Bandi, married a first husband. The "bukosi" (name commonly given to the lobolo money) was used to procure a wife for her brother. But she left her husband and was married by Nwamuzi. This second husband paid the lobolo, which was then returned to the first. But Hlapfuta ran away a second time and joined a man called Matshubele. She did the same thing five consecutive times, and finally she moved to Majlangaleu, to the suburbs of Lourenzo Marques, the favourite quarter of the prostitutes. There she was lost, and the "bukosi" also. Her paternal uncle, who had been put to any amount of trouble to recover the "bukosi" in order to give it back to the five abandoned husbands, seeing that it would be impossible to satisfy the last, could no longer bear the strain and committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree not far from my house in Rikatla. The debt remained with the girl's brother who "had eaten the bukosi."

583 562 393 Men are often better than their principles, and we have seen in the study of marriage and inheritance customs that the consent of a girl, and of a widow, is generally asked before any decision takes place. This is done as long as the male masters of the woman have no special interest in the choice. But should they have reason to impose a certain husband upon her, they will not hesitate to force her to accept him ; a young girl will be given up to a dirty old man, for whom she has no liking, on account of a lobola debt of twenty years standing! The lobola hardens the heart and the woman is unable to defend herself. She can always run away. But where will she hide, if all her relatives agree on her being sacrificed to the interest of the family ? Or she can threaten to commit suicide, and she occasionally does so. *b)* She must work for her husband, who gives her very little in return. It is true that she is not a *slave*. She is however *owned*. *c)* This is partly the cause of the shocking difference established between a husband and his wife. The married woman is henceforth absolutely prohibited from adulterous relations — which is a very admirable provision — but her husband is quite free in this respect : he has not been bought. 593 562 586 *d)* As regards her children, whatever may be her love for them, she does not in fact possess them. They belong to the father. If divorce takes place and the lobolo is not returned to the husband, he keeps them and the mother will be separated from them for ever (1).

583 606 578 2) A second series of consequences arising from this custom are the *strained relations* between the two contracting groups. We have sufficiently insisted on this subject. What makes dealings with parents-in-law so difficult ? It is the lobolo, the sum of money which has perhaps not been Fully paid, and

(1) The Rev. H. Dieterlen, of Basutoland, in a paper on the lobola, wrote the following words, which apply to the Thongas as well as to the Ba-Sutho : "A woman married under lobola bears children but possesses none. The children belong to those who gave the cattle. Whatever may be her own merits, she can see her children pass into the hands of the rawest heathen and be given over to the cupidity of rapacious and rascally relatives. She can be illtreated, driven away, abandoned, repudiated : she will have to live without children ; she will resemble a woman who has never had any. She is not supposed to have the heart and the feelings of a mother. And her children are treated as if they had no filial affection."

(L.), with its white or pink blossoms, which have spread all over the coast.

Having now finished our first general inspection, let us add some details about the huts and the open places in the village.

The hut, the construction of which we shall describe later on, (Part IV) has an opening (nyangwa) of variable dimensions closed by a door. In some parts of the Gaza country it is so small that one must positively crawl to enter it. Everywhere one must at any rate stoop low (korama). As regards the *threshhold* (ntjandja wa shipfalo), it is not taboo to step over it. The headman's threshhold however is dreaded because it was treated with medicines when the hut was built, so it is taboo to sit on it ; these powerful medicines might do harm and even cause death. In the middle of the black clay floor is a kind of raised circle, in the centre of which fire is occasionally lighted in winter on account of the cold. It is the interior *shitiko*. Cooking may be done here if it rains ; glowing embers sometimes remain on it during the night and numberless babies have been burnt to death by falling into the fire while their mothers were sleeping. On the left, on entering, is the sleeping place (shilawo) of the wife, on the right that of the husband. They both however generally spread their mats on the right and sleep beside each other. It is only during the tabooed periods (menses, nursing), that the husband must keep to his own particular side (p. 188).

The back of the hut is generally occupied by the big basket (ngula) in which clothing and seeds are kept. This spot is called *mfungwe*. In the roof *(lwangu)* are fixed or suspended various articles : ears of sorghum or millet, cobs to be used as seed at the next sowing, assagais, sticks and knobkerries etc., and against the walls one frequently observes rough drawings made with white clay, or, in the vicinity of towns, chromos of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, or Don Carlos, as the case may be!

The hubo and the bandla differ from each other. *Bandla* is a Zulu word which has supplanted the Ronga term *shisiso*, viz., "the place where one finds shelter from the wind." Men light a small fire there to warm themselves. They also eat together

in the bandla, and it is strictly reserved for them. Women are allowed to penetrate into it only when they bring food. Boys must remove the ashes from the fireplace, not women. The *hubo*, on the contrary, is open to all. A shed is sometimes built on it to afford shelter during the rainy days. There are special acts always performed on the hubo : the cutting up (shindla), the slaughtering and butchery of animals and the feast of "eating the head." The head of any slaughtered ox belongs to the men, and they eat it together on the hubo (See letter C.). It is the business of the young men to keep the hubo clean, and they sometimes assemble to pull up the grass which may have grown on it. In former times it was taboo to come to the hubo with sandals. Sandals are used for hunting and must be taken off before entering the village.

Another place to which I have already alluded is the *bukwele*, the "place of jealousy," where angry co-wives insult each other! On our diagram it would be located between 5 and 4, for the wives of the headman.

The Thonga village, this closed circle of huts, is a living organism. All its members form a whole whose unity is remarkable. This common life never appears in a more striking form than at the evening meal. Let us look at our diagram. In every yard the mistress of the hut has cooked her mealies and her sauce in different pots, and, when the sun sets, she distributes the contents (phamela) in wooden or earthen plates. The largest is for the husband. He sits on the bandla with his companions, the other men of the village, and the youths waiting for the meal. All these plates, generally carried by small girls or boys, are brought from all sides to the men's gathering. All do not necessarily contain the ordinary mealies pap ; some are filled with manioc, some with sweet potatoes, etc. The men attack the first plate, all of them taking the food with their fingers. They pass on to the second and so on to the last. Meanwhile each mother has filled other smaller plates, one for the girls, one for the boys, one for herself. She has even sent to each of the other women of the village a little of her cooking, and the others have done the same to her ; so each member of the community, when

621 596 833 768 1) *Social rites.* The muti, as we have seen, is a little organised community having its own laws, amongst which the most important seems to be the law of hierarchy. The elder brother is the undisputed master and no one can supersede him. He is the owner of the village. No one must "steal it" from him. Should any one do so, the whole community would suffer and no children would be born ; the life of the organism would be deeply affected. That is the reason why the headman must go first with his principal wife to have relations with her in the new village, and thus *take possession* of it or *tie* it. For this same reason, when the headman dies, the village *must* move. It is taboo to remain in it. Until the inheritance has been distributed, it is still *his home* (kwa kwe) ; but as soon as this ceremony has taken place, the villagers must go away, and close the door with a thorny branch. The part played by the 621 595 562 768 764 principal wife in all these ceremonies is most remarkable. It is absolutely imperative that the headman should "tie the village" with her, and not with another of his spouses. Should she be very old, the law must be observed all the same ; should she be ill, and unable to have sexual relations, the village simply cannot be moved. In the Northern clans we see her taking the shield and the assagai, closing the village and "giving it" to the inmates, even performing a sacrifice and praying to the gods. It is very rare to see a woman presiding at a public religious ceremony ; but she is the owner of the village as well as the headman. Moving is imperative when she dies as well as after the death of the headman. The main gate must also be closed and a new entrance made in the fence to be used during the year of mourning ; in the case of her death, this opening must be made on the left of the regular *mharana*, whilst, when the husband dies, it is made on the right side ; just as in the hut, when the corpse is removed for burial. (See page 138.)

351 789 621 2) *Protective rites.* These are those which concern the fence. This fence does not afford material protection. The branches dry up very soon and, in the case of a bush-fire, for instance, they would do more harm than good. It is a spiritual protection, a barrier of charms, of magic influences, to prevent the entrance of wizards and of all the hostile powers of the bush. We shall understand this better when treating of witchcraft superstitions. (Part VI.)

182 621 829 3) *Passage rites.* The reader will have been surprised to observe amongst the ceremonies of the moving of villages, many features which we have already met with in the circumcision school, or in the mourning customs. At first sight there seems to be no relation whatever between the moving of a village, the initiation of boys and the

622 affecting the life of the village are generally settled there.
596 Questions discussed with strangers and those regarding which there is no secrecy, and in which every one can take part, are discussed *on the central square*, on the "hubo". *Hubo* means the square, and also the council of the men of the village which the headman summons there to settle matters (ku khanela timhaka). Should they be able to come to an agreement together or with their visitors who have come to bring a claim, the matter is "cut" (ba tjema mhaka), viz., "ended". In the opposite case, when they disagree altogether, the question will be carried to a third place, before the *hubo of the chief*, in the capital. (See Part III).

562 Every one is welcome to take part in the discussions except women. As a rule men speak as little as possible with women on these matters. If a husband has a sensible, discreet wife, he may ask her advice. But if he has agreed with his companions on a point and changes his mind after having spoken with his wife, he will be severely blamed and accused of "spoiling the village" (hona muti).

622 The headman is more or less *responsible for all the claims*
596 lodged against his subordinates. Should one of his younger
672 brothers be prosecuted for a debt, the creditors will go to the numzane, and he cannot say: "This matter does not concern me." He will say to his brother: "Pay your debt," and, if the brother has no funds, he will help him, if possible, but it is only a loan, and the younger brother will pay back the money. As a rule members of the same family help each other in these matters. This is so much the custom that children are expected to pay the debts of their deceased parents, even if they have not inherited anything from them. This does not however procede from a moral sense of family dignity. They do it because the native authorities hold them responsible. They might be "arrested". In the case of a father who has died still owing some lobola money, the children will try to pay, but they will do it in order to obtain possession of the woman. Should a father have committed adultery with a married woman, and die without having paid the fine, his heirs are not considered responsible. On the other hand, if the father has been condemned as a wizard

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga



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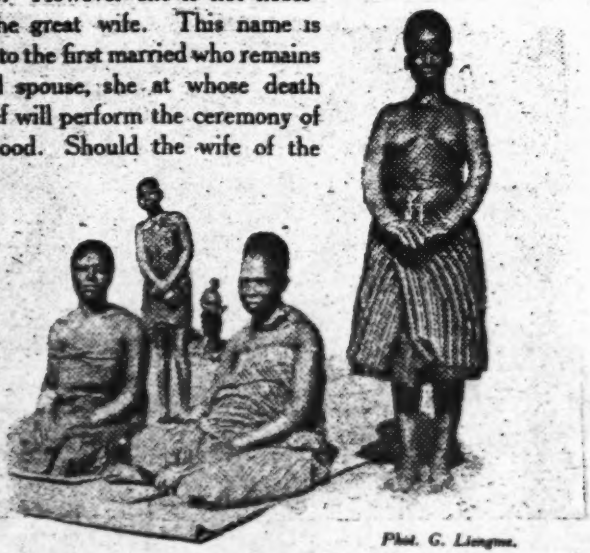
As regards the *queens* (tinkosikazi, a Zulu word), the chief's wives, there is not much to say about them. We have seen that one of them occupies a particularly honourable position, having been bought with the people's money and being "the wife of the country," she whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship. However she is not necessarily the great wife. This name is applied to the first married who remains the real spouse, she at whose death the chief will perform the ceremony of widowhood. Should the wife of the country die and should she not be the first married, he will not go through that rite on her account.



*Phot. G. Liengme.*

Ngoni Queens.

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Princesses are lobola with more money than ordinary girls. Except in this, they do not differ from them. It is not common for a woman to be called to the dignity of chieftainship amongst the Thongas; in this respect they differ from the Ba-Pedi, or Transvaal Ba-Sutho, who have had many illustrious reigning queens: Modjadji, Male etc. I only know one such case amongst the Rongas, and the queen was still living in 1912. Her name was Midambuze, daughter of Dambuze. Dambuze was the chief of a part of the Mabota country, northward of Lourenço Marques.

643 On his death, his son Gwaba was put in his place. But he was
562 deported by the Portuguese and his sister, Midambuze, filled the
582 position. Consequently she was not lobola, but chose a husband for herself, a man of common origin (a titlhuba nuna). Her son may succeed her ; in this case only can a uterine nephew of a chief take his place.

643 At Gungunyana's court queens played a great part. This
834 seems to be in accordance with the Zulu custom. After the death
847 of Chaka's mother, sexual relations were taboo for the whole tribe during one year, and children conceived during that time were put to death by order of the chief! (See Colenso : Ten weeks in Natal.)

643 I know of no case in which a foreigner became chief of a clan through having married one of its princesses. He can become hosana, but the true hosana will be his wife and he himself will be but a prince consort. I have heard of two instances in which this happened.

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726 789 751 have given you all my strength ; go and slay." They crossed the river at night and having reached the left bank, at a point about ten kilometers from the Portuguese camp at Morakwene, they were made to observe the strictest silence for a long time. Then they felt that valour (burena) had taken possession of them!

*Amongst the Ba-Nkuna* the war-medicine is also administered under the form of *sprinkling*. This sprinkling may take place in time of peace, when danger threatens. The chief kills a black ox and the army, summoned to the capital, is sprinkled and eats the flesh of the ox. This will make the country ready for any eventuality. But the ceremony is much more serious when war is at hand. Then the "great medicine of the country," carefully kept in the calabashes of the Court magicians, is mixed with *psanyi* of slaughtered sheep and with white sand taken from the river. During the night, the mukhumbi is formed and all the men sit down, their heads bowed over their knees, 726 their eyes closed, in perfect silence. Then one of the queens, 789 an old woman who no longer has any sexual relations, enters 751 the circle, absolutely naked. She dips a leafy branch into the 562 magical infusion and marches all round, inside and outside, sprinkling all the warriors and muttering the following words : "Kill them, break their pots, kill their dogs, catch their chief, bring him here, bring so-and-so and so-and-so." The warriors tremble with emotion. They pray to their gods in a low tone : "Save me! Help me!" But none of them dares to raise his eyes! They know quite well that they would die!

It is extremely important that the officiating woman should be old and have had no sexual relations for a long time, or "the assagais would lose their strength ; the masculine weapons would become blind and the feminine weapons alone would see... The woman would have untied the knot of the assagai ; she would cross the way (tjemakanya) of the great medicine... She must be a quiet woman (a rula)". (Mankhelu).

726 789 828 Similar customs exist in *Maputju*, where the medicine is called "the medicine of hatred,"—that which dispels all natural feeling and makes a man capable of killing his fellow-man! I give the particulars of this curious medical treatment as I have them from

of the bush are also burnt as soon as the grass dries up, so as to obtain fresh grass as early as possible in the spring. In autumn, after the harvest, oxen are allowed to wander about in the gardens, where they eat the mealies and millet and sorghum stems, and find better grass. 231

The Thongas castrate most of their bulls ; however they keep one or two in each herd for breeding purposes. Strange to say, these beasts are generally very tame ; they are hardly any wilder than the castrated oxen. However, the boys sharpen their horns and excite the bulls of different herds to fight. They pour live ants on their foreheads to irritate them. They give them names ; e. g. Makonyama, the one who threatens on both sides, — Mombomakhele, the one who has curly hair on his head, the terrible one, — Ndhontlha-ba-tsha, shisa-sha-munga, the one who beats the fire... people are burnt by the sparks as by embers of the mimosa tree, — Mabala-ya-tilo, the "stripes of heaven," — Mabata-bata, the one with many spots, etc. Many of these names are suggested by the colouring of the animals (1). I never heard songs in praise of the cattle similar to those found amongst the Ba-Sutho for instance. It does not seem that oxen have at any time played such an important part in the tribal life of the Thongas as is the case amongst Zulus or Suthos. 231 552

Women, especially those of childbearing age and having sexual relations, are not allowed to take care of oxen. It is taboo. When they require dung to smear the huts, they send little children or girls whose menses have not yet begun or who are at any rate unmarried, to fetch it from the oxen kraal. When oxen are sick, they are entrusted to the care of little girls, who must sometimes stay with them as long as two months without returning home. We have already met with these feminine taboos concerning oxen (I. p. 184) and seen that these prohibitions are based on the idea that the menstrual blood is as dangerous for oxen as for 231 562 841 784

(1) Native cattle are by no means of pure breed. There are many races which have been crossed : a small race with short horns and another with large lyre-shaped horns, probably brought from the Transvaal to the coast of Delagoa Bay. Madagascar oxen, with their strange prominence on the back, resembling zebus, have also been imported in great numbers into Lourenço Marques for butcher's purposes. Possibly some have been used for breeding.

231 men having relations with women during menstruation (I. p. 187).
562 Should a drop of it fall in the cattle kraal, this would endanger the
841 health of the whole herd. Women are even prohibited from
784 passing through a herd of oxen ; they must go round it, because otherwise the death of the calves would ensue. Amongst the Ba-Ngoni this taboo is so strong that a woman guilty of having transgressed against it was put to death (1).

231 The object of oxen-breeding is not milk but the acquisition
262 of *wealth* ; oxen mean wealth to the Native, a means of purchasing
556 girls and of thus increasing his family. Oxen are also bred for food, the meat being highly appreciated and divided amongst all the members of the family according to the strict rules previously explained (I. p. 329). The slaughtering is done by piercing the heart with an assagai, a painful and sometimes very protracted operation. This occurs at marriage feasts, at other family and national gatherings, at the sacrifice for rain (Part VI), and on special occasions, once a year for instance, when a headman wishes to feast his people. All, even neighbours who are not relatives and travellers, are welcome to the feast. Natives have wonderful olfactory powers. They seem to smell out the *lisuna*, viz., the peculiar odour of the meat, a mile off, and when an ox has been killed you see them emerging from the bush on all sides!

234 As regards *milk*, it certainly plays a part in the food of villages which are fortunate enough to possess a well-filled oxen kraal. The *milking* of the cows presents difficulties unknown in Europe! African cows have not yet learned to submit tamely to this operation! The calf must always be allowed to suck a few mouthfuls, then a boy pulls it away from the teat and the cow consents to be milked. Should a cow be too wild, they pass a string through its

241 (1) We meet here with an interesting instance of a superstition having no scientific
462 basis whatever, which is nevertheless productive of good results. Women must keep apart from oxen. Since the plough was introduced amongst South African Natives, they have been quick to notice that it is a very useful instrument, and have adopted it in many places. The plough has to be drawn by oxen and men alone are allowed to drive them. Thus women are relieved of the heavy work of tilling the fields which had been allotted to them by immemorial custom. It is probable that further knowledge will free the Natives from their old fear and from the taboo which resulted from it ; yet the idea that everything connected with oxen belongs to the domain of man will remain and thus real social progress will have been obtained through an absurd superstition !

### *a) The Priesthood.*

The Thongas have no sacerdotal caste, but, as has already been pointed out, the right of officiating in religious ceremonies is strictly confined to *the eldest brother*. All offerings must be made through him. To supplant him is a great taboo, and would entail the malediction of the gods, and even the death of the offender. There are, however, some minor offerings which anyone is allowed to make to his gods ; for instance, a lover who has been jilted, may, after having consulted the bones, give something to his god in order to obtain his aid in regaining the favour of the girl he loves. But, as a rule, no one must *hahla*, or even *gandjela*, before the death of his parents. If, after their death, their son should happen to dream of them, he must offer worship to the deceased by pouring some ground tobacco on to his wooden pillow, this being the commencement of his religious functions : "he begins to learn to gandjela" (Rangane), and, if he is the eldest, he may in course of time become the priest of the whole family. I heard, however, a man from Tembe assert that he had *hahla* when his father was still living, but in this case he had been designated by the bones. A little child may even perform the office if the bones order it ; his father will then hold him in his arms and pray in his stead. The bones often call on *women* to pronounce the prayer, especially the elder sister ; there is no anti-feminism in Thonga religion. In the *luma* ceremony, however, it must always be a man, the chief himself, who is the principal officiant. The wives of the clansmen naturally cannot take a prominent part in the offerings made for the clan, being themselves members of another clan and having their own ancestor-gods, to

(I. p. 268), offerings being frequently made to the gods of the mother's family through the agency of the maternal uncle. Hence the fact that uterine nephews take such a peculiar part in the ritual of the worship.

I must add that according to information just received from the Rev. A. Jaques, in the Northern clans uterine nephews do not steal the portion of the offerings put apart for the ancestor-gods. It seems that this custom, which I believe to be ancient, is met with essentially amongst the Ronga clans, where the special term *mupsyana* (an old Bantu word corresponding to *um-tshana* in Xosa and *mochana* in Sutho) has also been preserved to designate the uterine nephew, whilst it has fallen into disuse in the Northern clans. (Compare I. p. 162, 232, 498.)

No special use is made of the *bones* of the victim, except, as we shall see later, in offerings on behalf of those possessed. The only part kept is the *astragalus*, or the *psirungulo* just described, which are tied to the person on whose behalf the sacrifice has been made, probably to insure for him a permanent blessing from the gods. 782 777

It must be observed that the sacrificial ritual, as well as the medical art, lays great stress on the *sex* of the offerings. As a rule, there must be opposition between the sex of the victim and that of the person for whom, or to whom, the sacrifice is made. A woman is prayed for by means of a he-goat or a cock, and a man by a she-goat or a hen. 782 755 562

What is the reason of this rule? — "Psi yaka muti," says my informant. "It builds up the village." As a village can only grow and multiply by the union of the male and the female element, so in order to succeed in any pursuit it is necessary to unite both sexes. This principle is universally applied : when a girl is ill, a boy will bring her medicine, and vice-versa. The rule is also followed in another case. It may be that a mhamba has been wrongly performed and threatens to bring misfortune instead of appeasing the gods. This mhamba must consequently be "quenched, timula" "so that it may keep quiet and cool down, because it might cause annoyance and overcome them" (Mboza). This will be done by offering a mhamba of the opposite sex, which will correct the first. So if a female nkanye twig has been employed in the funeral ceremony, when the ritual ought to have been performed with a twig taken from a male stem, the ceremony will be repeated with a male twig in order to quench the first mhamba.

The last observation to be made about the gifts presented to the ancestor-gods is that the *psirungulo*, viz. the part of the victim which is tied to the person for whose sake it has been sacrificed, must be attached to the left part of the body if this person belongs to the female, to the right if to the male sex ; moreover in the sacrifices offered to maternal gods, the attachment is always done on the left side, whatever may be the sex of the person. Why is this? Because the left side belongs to the woman, the right to the man. We have seen that this is the case in the hut (I. p. 187). 782 562

782 *Shimantji* is the term used for left ; its etymology is unknown.
562 *Shinene* means right ; it also indicates nice, good, true. In this as in many other instances the male sex has arrogated to itself the better part!

782 2) *The magical objects used in worship.* First of all comes *the*
789 *great mhamba*, the nails, hair or faces of deceased chiefs. We are
778 evidently dealing here with a case of *communionist magic.* I explain in the same way the use of roots brought to light by a river which has washed away the ground (p. 387), but it may be that this is also an instance of *imitative magic* : the roots were hidden in the soil and have come to light ; in the same way the ancestor-gods have been buried in the ground and have again come forth to bless or curse their descendants. The curious astragalus bone of an antelope which had been swallowed by a hyena and found later in its stools and which Mankhelu employed to represent the gods in his divinatory set of bones, would favour this second explanation. In fact most of these objects are supposed to act in virtue of the principle of similarity : the nkanye twig, because this venerated tree will ensure respect to the person, living or dead, for whom it is used ; the piece of charcoal, because the enemy will be reduced to impotence just as the piece of wood has been consumed by fire ; the thorn employed by the general of the army, because the warriors will be able to pierce their opponents and kill them, etc. Is the number of magic objects used in this connection limited to those I have mentioned? I do not think so. It is probable that some others may be found in the various parts of the tribe. I even have proof that new objets of a magic character are still invented by worshippers who are gifted with special imaginative powers. My old friend Mankhelu was telling me the particulars of the battle of Nov. 1901, during the Sikororo war (I. p. 513), when suddenly jumping to his feet and taking a small bundle of grass, he said : "Listen! I will show you the mhamba I made when the enemy rushed on us. I took a bundle of grass like those which women use for binding their sticks, and feverishly separated the blades, saying : 'Let them fail to surround us, or decoy us!' Then I scattered them in all directions and said : 'Let them be so dispersed, carried off and destroyed!' And this is exactly what happened.